

LUNDY GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORTS FOR 2000 & 2001

2000

2000 was an intense year for Lundy as far as projects were concerned. This is the year that the majority of the projects under the original funding programme of 4 years ago are to be completed.

The first project that we could really appreciate the full benefits of was the new landing jetty with 2000 being the first official season of its full use. Although many people were initially concerned about a landing jetty on Lundy it has certainly been a success. In a very short time after completion of the jetty it has weathered in so well that most people have now taken it for granted and we receive only positive comments with regard to the improved accessibility to the Island.

The new Beach Building planned is to serve as a boathouse/interpretation centre and new diver's changing rooms with air compressor got underway this year. However, that Lundy factor came into play again and the original contractors went into liquidation (fortunately, we had determined the contract before they were actually liquidated due to under performance). A new contractor had to be sought and for many weeks all that could be seen was the steel frame of the building. Once the new contractors were on site, the timber cladding moved a pace and the main components of the building were soon completed and we are looking forward to the interpretation panels being installed early next year.

This summer the trenching for the new electric and water Infrastructure got underway in what turned out to be one of the wettest summers on record. No sooner had we dug trenches than we had to pump them out. However, the trenching provided an ideal opportunity for Shirley Blaylock, the National Trust Archaeologist, to come over to the Island when we were trenching the camping field and other areas around the Island, to carry out an archaeological watching brief. In the camping field next to Quarters, we uncovered a significant amount of medieval pottery and in the old wind generator field, Shirley found a flint barbed arrowhead which was in a remarkable condition. These artefacts we hope to put on display once the Rocket Shed repair works are completed.

The new Infrastructure is based on CHP (Combined Heat and Power) whereby heat produced by the diesel generator's is piped to provide heating and hot water to the Tavern and the Square properties, Quarters, Bartons Cottages and the Barn. This system has raised the efficiency of diesel generation from the current 60%'ish efficiency to 85%'ish efficiency. The diesel generators have also been relocated to a purpose built building within the covered yard next to the Engineers Workshop which we hope will reduce the noise levels compared to the current generator. It is anticipated that due to the delays experienced with the trenching through the inclement weather and sailings lost at the end of this year, the Infrastructure will not be fully operational until mid-2001. However, I am pleased to say that the Island is already recovering from the trenching for the new services.

The Rocket Shed which has been a redundant building for many, many years is also one of those projects that is currently underway and once renovated will be used as a small interpretation information centre, giving details of the history, flora and fauna, and archaeology of the Island. It is hoped that we will also be able to display some of the artefacts found during the trenching for the new services.

The final project for this year, which again was Grant Funded, were some footpath improvements, most notably the footpath down to the old Battery on the west side of the Island. This path has been deteriorating for some time and in the end became quite dangerous for people visiting the very popular fog Battery. We had to employ specialist contractors and used a technique known as "pitching" which is basically digging-in quite large, flattish stones and compacting soil around so eventually vegetation will grow around the stones and help prevent further soil-erosion. This technique has proved particularly successful with the Battery path. Other footpaths we have managed to improve are the upper and lower East Side paths where we have put in many culverts to prevent the flooding of the footpath during heavy rain and in other areas we have put down crushed stone to improve the footing.

Within the properties, the Landmark Trust completed two projects which were the refurbishment of Government House and Admiralty Lookout. Admiralty Lookout for the first time now has hot water and a loo that can be accessed without going outside, which is the height of luxury for those who stay at Admiralty Lookout on a regular basis!

With all the heavy rainfall we experienced in the summer, it was inevitable at the end of this year we suffered a significant landslip at the bottom of the beach road, next to the Trinity House stone. This was the largest landslip at least in the last 7 years and required significant effort to clear the road. Fortunately, being at the bottom of the access road, the damage to the road itself was not as great as it could have been, however we still have huge concerns as to the vulnerability of the only access road up to the Island, between the beach and Millcombe House.

This year after four years of hard work by Derek Oram the farmer, we have produced the best lambs yet. As a result we have started to market the lamb direct to the public and any additional income generated by the Lundy Lamb is being put directly back into the Island.

This has been a good year for Lundy insofar as the progress of projects. However, the wet summer and windy winter, together with access problems from Ilfracombe due to Pier Improvements works being delayed at the end of this year has put further strain on the financial viability of Lundy.

PAUL ROBERTS
June 2001

2001

Lundy like a lot of other places was badly affected at the start of 2002 by the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease. The main concerns for the Island were on two fronts. The first being the risk of the disease reaching the Island and affecting not only the domestic flock but also the feral population. We were left in no doubt at the time by MAFF that should the Island become infected then all domestic and feral animals would have to be slaughtered. The other concern being that with the Tourist industry decimated, the financial impact would have been so severe that the Island would have been unable to trade in its current form. It is the money generated by Tourism that pays for the conservation of the Island and its well-being.

The Island was quarantined so did not open at the start of the season in March, however after much advice it was decided to open the Island to the public from 7th April.

Having visitors to the Island when Foot and Mouth was raging in the North Devon area obviously put significant pressure on Derek Oram, the Island

Farmer. However, with the procedures we put in place of disinfecting all visitors footwear, both on the mainland before they boarded MS Oldenburg, and on the Island before they left the Jetty, ensured that the Island got through the season Foot and Mouth free.

From an economic point of view, whilst the season started off very slowly it made up for it at the end of the year and all-in-all we had a successful tourist season.

During the year we managed to finally complete our new Energy and Water infrastructure. On the energy side we now have a very efficient diesel based electric generation system with an equally efficient heat recovery (CHP). On the water side we have increased the storage capacity on the Island and improved the treatment of the water with a new ionisation plant.

Two significant events through the year with regard to conservation was the final launching of the Lundy Fund which is set up purely to help fund the conservation and preservation of the Island. The second event is that with the aid of the Fund we have now appointed an Island Ranger whose job it is to work with the Volunteers that we get, in a more constructive way than in the past. Rod Dymond, the Ranger, not only supports the Volunteers but also assists them with rhododendron clearance, bracken clearance, stone walling and footpath maintenance. Visitors to the Island this year have particularly commented about how good the footpaths on the East side of the Island are where we have improved the drainage on many and opened up wider paths through the rhododendron growth. The Fund has also enabled us this year to actually book out letting accommodation for volunteers which has aided us in forward planning our volunteer groups better than we have in the past.

We opened a new Booking and Information office at Ilfracombe and during the season this office is the main Booking and Information stop for all sailing tickets to the Island. This new office together with our new Computerised Booking System has quite significantly improved the efficiency of the selling of tickets.

Throughout the year there have been Pier improvement works on-going at Ilfracombe which have significantly affected the operation of MS Oldenburg, but will be worth it in the end with a more dedicated berth for us to use.

The Island Jetty has performed admirably throughout the season and is already weathering down to become more aesthetically acceptable. Already there is much colonisation under the Jetty and around its legs.

This season saw the official opening of our new beach building which holds Interpretation for visitors to see and learn about the Marine Nature Reserve. Within the building we also have improved diver changing facilities and a new dive compressor. The whole landing area has now been tidied up and has received favourable comments from visitors and divers alike.

PAUL ROBERTS

June 2002